

Police attacks spur resistance Occupy Oakland says 'Shut it down!'

By Deirdre Griswold

Nov. 1 — Like a force of nature that astonishes everyone with its power, Occupy Oakland has inspired bold actions by youth and workers across the United States, electrifying the political climate and forcing city officials and police authorities to constantly revise their plans for dealing with this broad-based people's movement.

Just a week ago, before dawn on Oct. 25, a massive police raid on the encampment in downtown Oakland, Calif., was supposed to put an end to it. The cops arrested more than 100 people, trashing their tents and other belongings in Oscar Grant Plaza. It was meant to send a signal to other occupations all across the United States.

By that evening, however, thousands had gone back downtown to reclaim the plaza. This time the police were even more vicious. Driving armored vehicles and encased in RoboCop riot gear, they fired teargas, stun grenades known as "flash-bangs," and projectiles they euphemistically called "bean bags" at the protesters. A 24-year-old member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, Scott Olsen, was hit in the head with one of these projectiles and hospitalized with severe injuries. Others required first aid. Again, there were massive arrests.

An article by Steven Argue on the indybay.org website pointed out: "Police forces across the country have been carrying out repression against the Occupy protesters with brutality and arrests in New York, Denver, Boston, Chicago, Oak-

land and elsewhere. Unarmed protesters have been repeatedly beaten, maced, tear-gassed and arrested for exercising their right to free speech. Meanwhile, armed Tea Party protesters who have pushed an extreme right-wing agenda of austerity for the working class have showed up at protests armed, but are not touched by the police."

Even with this brutal offensive against the movement, the surge of people who have been suffering in a thousand different ways from a capitalist system gone berserk could not be turned back. It grew as those who watched the videos and heard the reports of the Oakland police riot reacted with revulsion and anger.

The next night, under enormous pressure from an inflamed public, the city allowed about 2,000 people to occupy the plaza for a General Assembly. The mood was exuberant. At one point a solidarity statement was read from Cairo saying that Egyptians were marching in support, chanting "We are Oakland!" Loud cheers

replied, "We are Tahrir Square!"

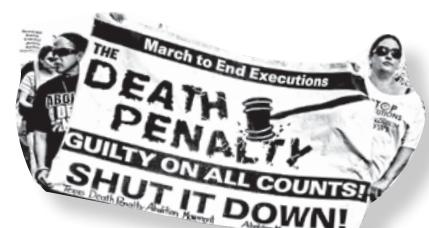
It was announced to more cheers that Occupy Wall Street was sending \$20,000 to support Occupy Oakland.

'Strike, strike, strike!'

A proposal was introduced by hip-hop artist Boots Riley that called for a general strike on Nov. 2. In short but succinct language, it said, "Instead of workers going to work and students going to school, the people will converge on downtown Oakland to shut down the city. All banks and corporations should close down for the day or we will march on them."

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HARLEM, N.Y.

Jazz artist, teacher honored

A public memorial and cultural tribute was held for Consuela Lee — an African-American jazz pianist, composer, arranger and teacher — at the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem in New York City on Oct. 29. Lee passed away from a long illness associated with Alzheimer's disease at the age of 83 on Dec. 26, 2009, in Atlanta.

Despite an unexpected snowstorm, world-renowned jazz artists, including members of Lee's family and former music students, traveled from around the country and the world to Harlem to honor her through song, dance and remembrances for her unique and innovative contributions to jazz and humanity. For 25 years, Lee taught music theory and composition at historic Black colleges such as Alabama State University, and Norfolk State University and Hampton Institute (now University) in Virginia. Archival video footage of Lee's performances and interviews was shown throughout the memorial.

Lee was the artistic director at Springtree/Snow Hill Institute for the Performing Arts in Snow Hill, Ala., for 23 years. At the Institute, Lee taught rural, impoverished, African-American children how to perform classical jazz standards composed by legends like Duke Ellington, as well as her original compositions for the children and the community. Snow Hill Institute



WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

Monica Moorehead and Cameron Moorehead pay tribute to their mother, Consuela Lee.

was originally founded in 1893 by Lee's grandfather, William James Edwards, as a private boarding school for former slaves.

Following Lee's successful effort to reopen the Institute, the U.S. government in 1995 named Snow Hill Institute a historic national landmark.

The Consuela Lee Foundation for Music Education was formed in 2010 to help carry forth the legacy by preserving her music. Lee believed that quality music should be passed down throughout the generations especially to help build pride and self-esteem for Black children living within a hostile, racist society. To learn more about the Foundation and Lee's contributions, go to www.consuelalee.com.

— Monica Moorehead

Operation Dixie marker reveals Black labor history

By James Wrenn
Rocky Mount, N.C.

A North Carolina Highway Historical Marker recognizing the 1946 tobacco leaf house workers union campaign was unveiled in Rocky Mount by the Phoenix Historical Society on Sept. 3. The United Electrical Workers union, Local 150 co-sponsored the event.

Entitled "Operation Dixie," the marker stands on N. Franklin Street at the corner of McDonald Street, across from the Imperial Centre, and denotes the China American Tobacco Company plant on N. Pearl Street, Rocky Mount, N.C., where workers cast the first pro-union vote in the campaign on Sept. 5, 1946.

Most African-American workers cast their first vote ever in this union election, since racist Jim Crow laws denied voting rights to Black people in North Carolina. This leaf house union campaign in 1946 is considered a precursor to the civil rights movement.

More than 90 people gathered at the Imperial Centre to hear remarks from Duke University historian Robert Korstad (author of "Civil Rights Unionism"), UE Local 150 Vice President Larsene Taylor and N.C. AFL-CIO President James Andrews. Rocky Mount City Councilman Reuben Blackwell read a moving resolution from the City Council honoring the courage of the tobacco

94-year-old
Cora Baines Tann
with N.C. AFL-CIO
President
James Andrews.

PHOTO: JAMES WRENN

workers of 1946.

Retired Wilson tobacco union worker Dorothy Edwards gave tribute to the pioneers of 1946 who paved the way for workers' rights and civil rights in eastern North Carolina. The highlight of the day was 94-year-old Cora Baines Tann, who was a worker at China American and joined the FTA-CIO union in that historic 1946 vote. She and James Andrews had the honor of unveiling the marker.

Leaf house workers, who were 100-percent African-American and 75-percent women, stemmed and processed tobacco in miserable working conditions with low pay and 12-hour shifts under often abusive white male supervisors in factories across eastern North Carolina.

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Activists respond to Obama's latest plan

'Moratorium needed to stop foreclosures'

By Kris Hamel

President Barack Obama announced with fanfare on Oct. 24 that he was bypassing "an increasingly dysfunctional Congress" and issuing federal rules to offer relief for struggling homeowners who may soon be facing foreclosure. Speaking in Las Vegas, one of the cities in the United States hardest hit by the ongoing foreclosure crisis, Obama outlined a plan that would offer help to an estimated 1 million to 1.6 million homeowners. (Associated Press, Oct. 24)

According to Jerry Goldberg, an organizer with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs, "The plan would make it easier for homeowners who are current on their mortgages but whose loans are underwater — meaning the value of the home is much less than what is owed on the mortgage loan — to refinance their loan to a lower interest rate." The plan would affect mortgages owned or backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, but would not reduce the principal amount owed on the loans.

"A homeowner's loan refinancing," Goldberg told Workers World, "would still be subject to the whim of the banks, which are the servicers for the loan, in carrying it out. This program would not

provide any aid to the millions who are currently behind on their mortgages, such as the 3.8 million homeowners who are facing foreclosure this year alone."

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition, based in Detroit, issued a press release Oct. 26 demanding the president use his executive authority to truly help the millions still facing foreclosures and evictions. It stated: "If Obama is serious about addressing the foreclosure and mortgage crisis ... he could issue an executive order placing a two-year moratorium on all foreclosures and foreclosure-related evictions.

"Because the federal government now owns or insures 75 percent of all mortgage loans through Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae and HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development], the President has the absolute authority to implement such a moratorium. In fact, President Obama's announcement of a modest loan refinance program through executive action confirms this.

The mortgage crisis was created by the criminal, fraudulent actions of every major bank, as confirmed in the Senate Select Committee report issued this year. The banks continue to get bailed out with virtually every foreclosure by the government-owned Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, as well as by HUD. The banks get paid full value for their inflated loans, and



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Occupy Detroit demands foreclosure moratorium, Oct. 21.

then the government tosses homeowners on the streets and sells their homes for a pittance. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this silent bailout of the banks through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will cost taxpayers \$389 billion.

"The people need more than a modest refinance program that will help a few

who manage to get through to the banks. What is needed is for the President to take a real step to stop the foreclosure epidemic that is destroying our communities. It's overdue for President Obama to place an immediate two-year moratorium on all foreclosures and foreclosure-related evictions." □

Autoworkers and the new contracts

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

At its peak, the United Auto Workers union boasted 1.5 million members. Hundreds of thousands of autoworkers were scattered in plants across the country, making parts and building vehicles. Since the high tech revolution of the 1980s, numerous plants have been closed. The UAW now has a mere 112,000 members at Ford, General Motors and Chrysler combined. This shrunken workforce can produce as many cars and trucks as the mighty army of bygone days, with the bosses pocketing huge cost savings.

Black labor history

Continued from page 2

These workers were at the base of a very profitable tobacco and cigarette industry.

In the summer and fall of 1946, nearly 10,000 leaf house workers joined unions in a massive organizing campaign called "Operation Dixie" with the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural & Allied Workers of America, and also the Tobacco Workers International Union.

The first pro-union vote by Chinese-American workers was followed by 26 more pro-union votes in the next two months in the North Carolina towns of Oxford, Henderson, Rocky Mount, Greenville, Wilson, Smithfield, Goldsboro, Kinston and Lumberton, and South Boston, Va. Workers secured union contracts in over 30 tobacco plants that resulted in higher pay, eight-hour workdays, paid holidays, improved working conditions and grievance procedures to address abusive supervisors. Today, only two tobacco union locals remain.

The Phoenix Society will present a lunchtime "History a la carte" program on Operation Dixie at the North Carolina Museum of History on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2012, at noon. □

Nevertheless, the driving force under capitalism is to maximize profits and push wages down. When GM, Ford and Chrysler entered negotiations with the UAW, they were determined to block pay increases.

UAW International President Bob King and the union's International Executive Board have sought a "partnership" with the companies to assure profitability and competitiveness. They negotiated four-year contracts that freeze most workers' pay and uphold major concessions agreed to previously. Workers have not had a raise in five or more years and lost the cost-of-living allowance in 2009.

How do you sell a pay freeze? At Ford and GM the enticement was large, one-time and annual lump-sum bonuses. Second tier workers — hired after 2007 and making half what other workers made — were given a raise of several dollars an hour. The UAW leadership told Ford workers that if they voted no they would be stuck on strike for months. At GM they used the no-strike clause to convince workers they would end up worse off if the contract was decided by an arbitrator. Despite alleged bribes and intimidation, over a third of these workers voted no.

On Oct. 26, the UAW announced the ratification of its contract with Chrysler. But the 23,000 UAW hourly workers at Chrysler came very close to rejecting their contract. Chrysler and Fiat CEO Sergio Marchionne demanded the same concessions but offered less than half the bonus money as the other two companies. Workers were then bombarded with the message that they could lose everything in arbitration and were asked by union officials to consider Chrysler's weaker financial position in comparison to Ford and GM.

Workers still wanted to stand up to Marchionne. Then, some workers began to fear that if their plant voted no, other plants would get the work. Up until the

last ballot, the fate of the agreement was unknown. Officially, only 55 percent of the Chrysler membership voted for ratification.

Skilled trades workers, who vote separately, voted 55 percent against. The UAW Constitution mandates the union investigate whether the rejection was over what are called "special provisions for skilled trades." If so, the union is supposed to try to renegotiate those provisions. Yet on Oct. 26, less than 24 hours after the last ballot was cast and without consulting a single worker, the IEB announced that the skilled trades vote was based on "economics." The contract was declared ratified.

Skilled trades and lowered wages

Once the plants employed huge numbers of skilled trades workers. These jobs paid well and were an escape from the drudgery and monotony of the line. Workers of color and women workers have had to fight hard to get into the trades.

These jobs were highly specialized; a plant could have 20 different trades classifications under one roof. Job security was protected by lines of demarcation defining who did what. As production jobs were decimated by technology, trades jobs were seen as more secure. High tech, the reasoning went, would even increase the need for advanced skills.

The skilled trades "rationalization" in the Chrysler contract, with other names and minor variations at Ford and GM, eliminates lines of demarcation, subcontracts building maintenance and abolishes most classifications. It is the absolute dismantling of the whole maintenance infrastructure.

The model is the GM Lake Orion, Mich., assembly plant, which was featured in a July 11 New York Times article. GM's half-billion dollar investment allows the plant to build subcompact cars with "fewer and cheaper workers." Eventually 100 percent

of production workers — "fewer" with the latest retooling — will be "cheaper" at second-tier pay, at least \$9 an hour less than what "traditional" workers in other plants make.

What the Times doesn't state is that this plant operates with a crew of just 45 tradespeople per shift. With skilled maintenance cut to the bare minimum, the Lake Orion model risks irreparable damage to tools and machinery.

Just as they have wasted scores of highly productive plants, to cut labor costs the Detroit Three are playing Russian roulette with their own multibillion-dollar investments. This is the modus operandi of capitalism in decline. The capitalist class can only seek to solve its crisis, caused by a system of exploitation, by more aggressive exploitation of the working class.

By grabbing more of the wealth that workers produce, Ford and GM are making record profits and Chrysler expects to make \$3 billion next year. After ratification was announced, Marchionne seized the offensive advantage, declaring his intention to eliminate two-tier. Members oppose two-tier, but not on Marchionne's terms. His implied goal of level wages has outraged workers.

Gone are the days when labor could negotiate gains by insuring class peace. The notion of "partnership" today, with the International union functioning as a broker between workers and bosses, stems from the lack of a class-struggle orientation on the part of the union leadership.

In the long run, the rank and file will have to organize as an independent force — pulling together first — and second-tier production workers, trades workers, retirees, and the broader community suffering from high unemployment — to build resistance to capitalist restructuring.

Grevatt has worked for Chrysler for 24 years and is a member of UAW Local 869 in Warren, Mich., which voted down the contract.

Texas march says 'Stop executions'

By Gloria Rubac
Austin, Texas

Ray Krone, the 100th person to be freed from U.S. death row, was one of 20 exonerees with Witness To Innocence who led the 12th Annual March to Abolish the Death Penalty on Oct. 22 at the Texas Capitol in Austin.

"You have people on death row right here in Texas, Mr. Governor, who have a real shot at innocence. They want the chance to prove it, just like the rest of us did. ... You have been running from the truth. Look at the truth. Look at the death penalty. ... You can't fix it so you must abolish it now!" stated Krone to cheers, outside Gov. Rick Perry's residence, the governor's mansion.

Protesters there called Perry, a Republican presidential contender, a serial killer for his record-setting 237 executions since 2000.

On the Capitol's north steps, Clarence Brandley of WTI told of his nearly 10 years on death row and how he twice came within days of executions. "If it was up to the state of Texas, I would be dead today. But my family and supporters did not give up, and today I can stand before you as an innocent man and ask you to keep fighting to abolish the death penalty because I left many other innocent men behind on death row."

Rodney Reed's mother, Sandra Reed, told about her son's frame-up for the murder of a white woman, although the evidence pointed to the woman's fiancé, a police officer. Reed's brothers' banner read, "Innocent Man on Death Row: Free Rodney Reed!"

Ron Keine reported that he was on New Mexico's death row for three years when, "Fortunately, a cop ... confess[ed] to the crime I was on death row for. I was lucky — not everyone is."

As 500 protesters chanted, "Texas says death row! We say hell no!" and "1-2-3-4,



Family members of death row prisoners speak out; at microphone, Vicki Panetti.



Exonerees and members of Witness To Innocence participate in annual march.

racist, cruel and anti-poor! 5-6-7-8, stop the killing by the state!" they marched in the downtown Capitol area. Cheers arose from people attending festivals and other events, especially on Sixth Street, a popular strip of restaurants, coffee houses, clubs and live music venues.

Several families traveled from the Rio Grande Valley on the U.S./Mexico border to support their relatives now on death row under the Texas "Law of Parties."

"My son, Robert Garza, never murdered anyone, yet he and five others were convicted in a capital murder case and sent to be executed. They never caught the real killer, yet five of our loved ones are on death row for his murders. We have to work to get the Law of Parties taken off the books and the death penalty abolished," said Sylvia Garza. Her seven-year-old son, Eric De la Cerdá, stood by her side holding his older brother's photo. There were

banners for other Law of Parties victims — Jeff Wood and Humberto Garza.

Delia Perez-Meyer spoke for her brother, Louis Castro Perez, who has always claimed his innocence. His family has worked for 10 years to help prove this. His sister travels nine hours round-trip from Austin to Livingston for weekly visits. The film, "The Road to Livingston," is being made about the family's ordeals.

Vicki Panetti's schizophrenic brother, Scott Panetti, is on Texas death row. She stressed, "Mental disabilities are a serious health problem. The judge should never have let my brother represent himself at trial, as he was wearing a purple cowboy costume and subpoenaed John Wayne. He needed serious mental health care, not the death penalty."

Accompanied by flutist Elizabeth Stein, Panetti, a professional singer, sang "Death by Texas," the theme song for Execution Watch, a KPFT Pacifica Radio show broadcast in Houston on 90.1 FM at 6:00 p.m. only on Texas execution days.

Florida exoneree and poet Delbert Tibbs read a poetic tribute to Troy Davis written by Texas death row poet and activist Harvey "Tee" Earvin. On Sept. 21, Georgia executed Davis in a racist miscarriage of justice.

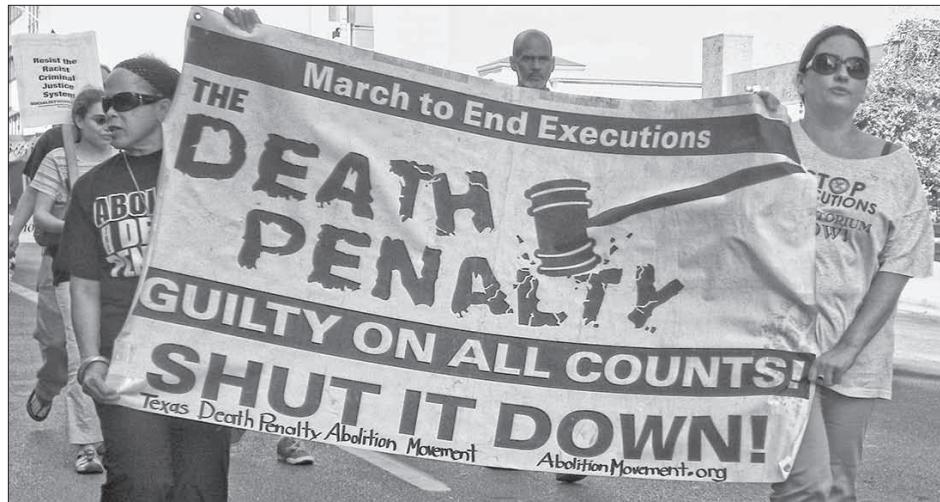
Four executions are currently scheduled in Texas, including Hank Skinner's on Nov. 9. He has been fighting for 10 years to obtain DNA testing. Sandrine Ageorges-Skinner, his spouse, sent a message from Paris, appealing for support, petition signatures and referring all to www.hankskinner.org for updates.

Skinner came within 45 minutes of execution last year, when the U.S. Supreme Court granted him the right to sue in civil court for the release of evidence for testing. Since then, the Texas legislature has passed a bill calling for DNA testing when a person's life is at stake. Right after Skinner filed a lawsuit, the district attorney in Pampa, Texas, set his execution date.

At the ending rally, an Occupy Austin speaker connected their demands to those concerning the criminal justice system and the death penalty.

The Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement named their chartered bus from Houston, "The Ester Express," in honor of Brother Ester King, abolition movement advocate, who passed away on Sept. 1. He was a lifelong activist, first involved in the 1960s Civil Rights movement in Mississippi with Friends of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and then in Houston's African-American community.

Lucha Rodriguez, an "Ester Express" rider, said: "It was exciting to be with 20 people who survived death row and are talking about their terrifying experiences. They were inspiring. They raised that if 138 people were exonerated from U.S. death rows, then how many innocent people were executed. That is why we must abolish the death penalty. The system does not work." □



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Notes from Occupy Oakland

By Dave Welsh
Oakland, Calif.

You gotta love the stamina and fighting spirit of this young movement.

On Tuesday, Oct. 25, a pre-dawn police raid tore up and destroyed the Occupy Oakland camp. It was a war zone. More than 500 police from at least 12 jurisdictions took part in the paramilitary operation, arresting more than 130 by day's end, beating many and sending one Iraqi war vet to the hospital in critical condition.

But the people had the last word, fighting to reestablish their liberated area. Many hundreds of militants marched for hours that night through the downtown war zone, thick with cops, to reclaim the streets.

By Wednesday night someone had torn down the police fence and tents sprouted up again on Oscar Grant Plaza. Soon a new camp kitchen was up and running, dishing out plates of hot food. The mayor and police, stung by the ferocity of public outrage at Tuesday's police riot, were in retreat. The initiative was once again with the people.

Every evening since then, mass meetings of 1,000 to 3,000 people have packed the open-air amphitheater in front of Oakland's City Hall — building for a one-day General Strike and Mass Day of Action on Nov. 2 to converge on downtown and "shut down the 1%." This is a movement with legs.

The encampment began on Oct. 10, Indigenous People's Day. I brought my sleeping bag and started camping out there about 10 days later. The large plaza was a sea of tents. There were maybe 300 people camping, with many more coming by for rallies, a bite to eat or some sharp conversation about the burning issues facing us.

There was a medical tent — with help from the California Nurses Association — a child-care tent, media tent, kitchen and supply tent. Also porta-potties courtesy of the Oakland teachers' union, city workers' union and Everett & Jones BBQ. Teamsters brought the water. Donations flowed in from a supportive community.

The big banner at the entrance read, "Oakland Commune — Oscar Grant Plaza." And it's true that the camp became a real community. During my four nights in the camp, African Americans made up about 30 percent to 35 percent of those eating and sleeping there, preparing the food or taking on other camp responsibilities.

On Friday night, Oct. 28, musicians and dancers took over the amphitheater with some politically charged reggae music. On Saturday it was hip-hop night. Sunday was movie night, showing the powerful film "Viva Mexico" on a big screen.

At midnight, following camp rules, the

sound was turned off so people could sleep. But a lot of people weren't ready for bed, so they gathered in groups around the plaza to debate everything from the U.S./NATO assault on Libya to the attacks on migrant workers, the new Jim Crow and the prisons, or how to deal with sexism and homophobia inside the camp. It was like a People's Free University on the streets of Oakland. You got a glimpse of what a society based on real equality might look like.

The outpouring of support following the police raid was something to behold.

A moving candlelight vigil of 3,000 rallied in the amphitheater for Scott Olsen, the Iraqi war vet who was in the hospital with a concussion and brain injury from a police projectile. His comrades from Iraq Veterans Against the War and Steve Morse, a Vietnam vet, spoke simply but powerfully about the wars overseas and the war at home that had just struck down their friend.

GA votes for General Strike

On Oct. 26, the General Assembly of Occupy Oakland, which meets at 7 p.m. every day, voted by 97 percent to hold a General Strike and Mass Day of Action on Nov. 2. The Strike Committee meets every day at 5 p.m. A first run of 12,000 flyers is being distributed, reading: "Everyone to the streets! No work! No school! Converge on downtown Oakland."

Demands are: 1) Solidarity with the worldwide Occupy Movement; 2) end police attacks on our communities; 3) defend Oakland schools and libraries; 4) against an economic system built on inequality and corporate power that perpetuates racism, sexism and destruction of the environment.



WW PHOTOS: JUDY GREENSPAN

Above, welcoming banner to Oscar Grant Plaza in Oakland.



On a proposal from Boots Riley, the Oakland-based hip hop artist, the Occupy Oakland strike assembly voted unanimously to march on Nov. 2 to shut down the Port of Oakland. The resolution stated: "... As part of the Oakland General Strike, we will march on the Port of Oakland and shut it down. ... We are doing this in order to blockade the flow of capital," as well as show solidarity with International Longshore and Warehouse Union workers in their struggle against EGT in Longview, Wash. EGT is a grain exporter, backed by major Wall Street interests, that is trying to break ILWU jurisdiction over longshore work so they can hire cheaper labor.

The resolution said further: "This is but one example of Wall Street's corporate attack on workers. The entire world is fed up

with the huge disparity of wealth caused by the present system. ... The Oakland General Strike is a warning shot to the 1% — their wealth only exists because the 99% creates it for them."

Labor support

Many unions and labor councils have condemned the police raid and endorsed the Nov. 2 General Strike. Without specifically calling for strike action by their members, they are nevertheless actively encouraging their members to participate in a mass shutdown of business as usual in Oakland. Union staff and members come to the plaza to take part.

Rank-and-file members of the ILWU union issued a statement, titled "Defend Occupy Oakland with the muscle of organized labor," which urges support for the General Strike. Other cities are mobilizing to support the Nov. 2 call. One flyer in Philadelphia called on workers to strike for 99 minutes on that day — "in solidarity with the 99%."

Welsh, a retired union letter carrier, was one of those arrested by Oakland police during the mass bust at Oscar Grant Plaza in the wee hours of the morning on Oct. 25. □

Occupy Oakland says 'Shut it down!'

Continued from page 1

The proposal ended with: "The whole world is watching Oakland. Let's show them what is possible." The proposal passed with 96.9 percent in favor. At that point, a participant told WW, "The whole crowd erupted in chanting 'Strike, strike, strike!'"

This bold call for a general strike has energized the labor movement, which had been pronounced moribund by the capitalist media. Support for the Oakland strike has been pouring in from all over. While anti-union laws threaten huge fines and decertification for officially striking,

rank-and-file committees are calling on their sisters and brothers to swarm downtown Oakland on Nov. 2.

Some union locals, like Service Employees Local 1021 of Oakland, have publicly called for their members to be there. A statement from the local called on members "to join a day-long 'Peaceful Day of Action' in support of Occupy Oakland and against the banking industry and last week's police brutality against the Occupy Oakland encampment." The Carpenters' union issued a similar statement.

The movement intends to march to the Port of Oakland, where longshore work-

ers sympathize with their demands. A statement from Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union read: "Occupy Oakland protesters have called for a General Strike on November 2. Whether this actually means real strike action by workers depends in large part on union participation. Local 10 has always been in the lead in the labor movement and all eyes are on us. As a first step, in defending our union and others against economic and political repression, we need to mobilize our members to participate in the rally and occupation Nov. 2 in Oscar Grant Plaza. Shut it down!"

Protests, speakers at Occupy Philly



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Despite unseasonably cold temperatures, hundreds marched two miles from the University of Pennsylvania to join participants of Occupy Philly outside City Hall on Oct. 28. By 9:30 p.m. the crowd had grown to more than 1,000 people, gathering to hear political activist Angela Davis.

Davis, who had earlier that day addressed a conference at Penn, drew cheers as she linked Occupy Wall Street to Occupy Philly to Occupy Oakland. She stressed the importance of building a movement that is inclusive, stating, "The unity of the 99% must be a complex unity. Move-

ments in the past have primarily appealed to specific communities — whether workers, students, Black communities, Latino communities, women, LGBTQ, Indigenous peoples, or around specific issues like the environment, food, water, war, the prison industrial complex."

Davis also raised the need to confront the prison industrial complex and the "unalterable damage prisons and the criminal justice system have inflicted on our communities." Her call to "decarcerate PA" drew cheers, as did her announcement of growing support for Occupy Oakland's call for a general strike on Nov. 2.

When cold rain and heavy sleet made walkways too slippery for a planned

Continued on page 10

In NYC's Zuccotti Park

The uprising continues where it began

By Caleb T. Maupin
New York

Occupy Wall Street, the 24/7 encampment of thousands of people in lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park, most of them youth, has become a center of countless acts of resistance to capitalism and its crimes.

As Workers World Party First Secretary Larry Holmes put it in a recent speech: "It's like a neon sign has been put up proclaiming to the people everywhere: 'Rise up!'"

Almost every day there are different marches and demonstrations, all focused on a particular crime or outrage committed by Wall Street bankers and the capitalist class. Unions such as the Communication Workers and the Teamsters hold rallies against cutbacks, bringing out their rank and file to parade through the streets. The Verizon workers, still struggling for a contract, have marched into the park on numerous occasions and been greeted with applause and support.

Organizations demanding a single-payer health insurance program march with the slogan: "Health care for the 99%!"

On Oct. 21, a contingent of youth from Occupy Wall Street joined the October 22nd Coalition in a Harlem rally against the "stop and frisk" practices of the New York Police Department. The rally ended as Dr. Cornel West and countless others engaged in civil disobedience, blocking

the doorway of the 28th Precinct on Frederick Douglass Boulevard, where 30 were arrested.

In response to the horrific assault on Occupy Oakland, hundreds of youth held a rally and then took the streets in solidarity with those thousands of miles away who had joined them in rising up and occupying public space.

The militancy of the marches continues to escalate. Police barricades are almost routinely pushed aside and unpermitted conquests of streets by crowds of students, union members and other activists occur frequently, despite the obvious anger of the NYPD over its failed efforts to prevent them.

In some instances the police are even taunted with chants of "Tony Bologna! Tony Bologna!" the officer who brutalized demonstrators and bystanders with pepper spray and demonstrators with pepper spray. He was docked 10 vacation days and reassigned after a public outcry.

A Jobless Working Group now militantly fights on behalf of unemployed workers as an official section of the General Assembly at Zuccotti Park. The demand of "No fare for the unemployed!" was raised by the Jobless Working Group as they marched into subway stations, exposing the role of Wall Street in robbing workers with high public transportation fares.

Marches against the growing energy corporation practice of hydraulic fracking

take place quite frequently. Banks that profit from this environmentally harmful practice are targeted.

'Wall Street is war street'

"Wall Street is war street!" is the rallying cry of countless anti-war marches.

No march is complete without the staple chants of "All day! All week! Occupy Wall Street!" and "We are the 99%" which have been the rallying cries since the beginning of this mass people's uprising on Sept. 17, a month and a half ago.

The NYPD banned all tents and structures from the gathering, but the ban was defied. The first tent to go up was in honor of the traditional Jewish harvest festival of Sukkos. It displayed a placard with the First Amendment of the Constitution and its reference to religious freedom. The tent remained standing.

This set the precedent for more tents in the park. Now it is filled with them.

On Oct. 28, the police forcibly removed all power generators, which could be used for space heaters, computers and other electrical equipment. The following day was a mess of rain and snow. Press pundits talked as if this would be the end of the occupation.

However, on the evening of Oct. 30 the square was full of several thousand people once again. They awaited an address by former political prisoner and communist, Dr. Angela Davis, after the snow had cleared.

To any regular at Zuccotti Park, the role of Workers World Party cannot be missed. On a daily basis, a table is set up by party members and supporters, decked out with Marxist-Leninist literature such as Fred Goldstein's pamphlet, "Capitalism at a Dead End"; the booklet, "Wisconsin: Lighting the Fires of Class Struggle"; and printed copies of Larry Hales's "Letter to the Occupy Wall Street Movement." Thousands of copies of Workers World newspaper have been distributed in the park, where many willingly give donations for the latest issue.

Many demonstrators have signed up for more information on Workers World Party and the struggles it engages in. Conversations at the table often delve directly into the burning issues of the day, such as Libya and NATO's murder of Moammar Gadhafi, the history of the Soviet Union, Cuba and other struggles for socialism, the struggles of the Palestinian people, as well as the bank bailouts and the capitalist roots of the current economic meltdown.

This mass, popular uprising against capitalism and its symptoms remains strong. The crowds each day consist of several thousand, rarely less and often more, especially during a specific march or rally.

The gathering is continuing to resist police repression and hostile weather conditions with more strength than ever, causing the Wall Street class to tremble in fear of this mass, broad movement that it has not been able to squelch. □

A youth's view from Durham to Wall Street

By Lamont Lilly
Occupy Wall Street, N.Y.

Go to www.workers.org to read the entire article.

The scene was a perfect storm of organized chaos. Here were the young and old, students and workers, immigrants and oppressed, all addressing the failures of capitalism's current worldwide crisis, outlining the destructive forces of global banking systems and highlighting the lack of communal values in a place that loves to cry patriotism.

The idea of occupying Wall Street may have begun as a young, white thing, but by the time we arrived on the evening of Oct. 8, there were participants of all nations, all races and all ages — raising a range of pertinent issues.

There were Haitians who had marched across the Brooklyn Bridge earlier that day in a show of solidarity. There were domestic and sanitation workers from Queens. There were the unions and labor organizations from all over the country — working-class adults who currently live the effects of capitalism from the front lines; blue-collar folks whose wages have



WW PHOTO: RACHEL DUELL
Lamont Lilly, New York City, Oct. 8.

been decimated by the manipulation of global markets, international corporatism and "Third World" exploitation. For this one night, I was living what democracy really looks like: the common masses united in a single front.

Homemade signs and justice banners waited on deck for live action. While some were large and others were small, all were quite grand in stature, bearing sharp demands and philosophical ideals such as

"Books not Bombs" and "Stop the War on the Poor." It was a true Who's Who of change slogans. There were also posters of Troy Davis and Mumia Abu-Jamal. However, nearly everyone possessed an anti-capitalist placard of some sort. The LGBTQ community was also in full-effect, but that was merely the surface.

There, within this tightly restricted park-ground, was everything a revolutionary would need for a couple of months; that is, aside from a public restroom. There were mass water dispensers and community chow lines, a first aid station equipped with medics, and an immense library for learning and entertainment. There were sleeping bags, tents and thinly padded nap mats for rest and relaxation. There was art and music, love and hope.

While walking around attempting to find a place to post my belongings, I ran across what appeared to be an old makeshift reggae band — four middle-aged white men with golden-locked hair and long beards, sitting on the ground with their guitars, fumbling through Bob Marley's, "Redemption Song." I jumped in, considering they only knew half the words to one of my personal favorites. There I was, howling to the top of my lungs with four strangers. We were 30 yards from the Occupy Wall Street drummers.

Purpose and the point

These whirlwinds of local protests sprouting across the country aren't simply about disproportionate tax benefits, financial inequality and corporate greed. It's far bigger than just the "rich and poor." The complexities of the issues are much more intertwined than that. This is about the mismanagement of human capital — the manipulation of the common masses worldwide. This is about the audacity of the "haves" who obviously don't give a damn, who could care less whether your home was foreclosed last year or not,

or whether your daughter had a decent meal at her public school today. The 1 percent aren't concerned with racism, sexism and homophobia. Workers' rights don't affect them. Social class is nonexistent from the elite's perspective. Homeless veterans are "no such thing," while universal health care is considered a "waste of money."

Growing up in the 1980s, we witnessed firsthand how greed drives poverty, and in turn, how poverty perpetuates crime. We understand fully that within our current social fabric, someone's always going to lose. We are the Prison Industrial Complex! And we're the same ones who keep being told educational funds have run dry. Yet, we operate under the guise of a government that somehow finds scores of resources for military occupations.

This isn't about demands, folks. The Occupy phenomenon is really about the people reclaiming our own destiny, producing our own change from the ground up. "Occupying" is about the connection of all oppressed people.

Some have deemed the Occupy Movement a leaderless struggle, but that's the whole point. We're all leaders and should be respected as such — not lied to, cheated on and outright deceived by state-sponsored pimps swindling billions from the few crumbs we do have. Well, "We the People" have decided it's time to represent ourselves, whether it's Raleigh or Wall Street. We're tired of being wage slaves. We're tired of our jobs skipping town for open borders and vast NAFTA experiments. We're also tired of a justice system that bears no resemblance to justice, at least not from Oscar Grant's perspective. Yet, Republicans and Democrats alike wonder why the People are taking to the street. Probably because that's the one place they never come. Power to the People! Power to the Streets!

The writer is a member of the Durham, N.C., Workers World Party branch.

Occupy Rockford, Ill.

More than 80 people with the Occupy Rockford movement marched on the opening of a new federal courthouse on S. Church Street on Oct. 29. Police attempted to lead the march, but a group of masked skateboarding youth broke off from the route and took to other streets, eventually meeting up with the rest of the march at the courthouse.

When the march arrived at the courthouse, the protesters were welcomed by a banner reading, "End market madness — stop Wall Street welfare — tax the richest 1%." A group of activists had attached

— Tommy Cavanaugh

Occupy Milwaukee demands 'jobs now!'

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

Hundreds marched in Milwaukee on Oct. 29 demanding jobs, an end to foreclosures and for schools, not jails and war. Another major demand was that the Wisconsin Legislature kill bills now in committee that, along with other racist, anti-worker provisions, would make it legal for companies to fire convicted felons. The bill would essentially make felons indentured servants of big business.

Sponsored by Occupy Milwaukee and Occupy The Hood, an African-American group, the Oct. 29 march kicked off after a fiery rally at Lincoln Park in the north side of Milwaukee, a predominantly African-American community. Protesters then marched more than two miles to the abandoned A.O. Smith manufacturing plant, which used to employ thousands of union workers in Milwaukee, many of them African-American. The closing of the plant has devastated the community.

The multinational, intergenerational crowd, including many African-American youth, marched through the heart of Milwaukee's African-American community



Milwaukee, Oct. 29.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

chanting and carrying signs and banners such as "Jobs, not police terror" and "Jobs now — make the banks pay." They received a rousing response, with many coming out of their homes and businesses to join the march.

Once at A.O. Smith, African-American, Latino/a and white students and workers conducted a speakout as hundreds sat down in the street in front of the plant. Numerous organizations joined the activi-

ties, including the immigrant rights group Voces de la Frontera, Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied For Hope, Peace Action, 9 to 5 Working Women, Students For a Democratic Society, the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement, the L.U.V. Brigade, the Latin American Solidarity Committee, Freedom Road Socialist Organization and Workers World Party. Workers represented many unions, including the American Federation of Teachers, the

Service Employees, the Teamsters, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the National Education Association and more.

Occupy Wall Street actions are happening across Wisconsin. In Appleton, an Oct. 30 march to protest the police attack on Occupy Oakland participant Scott Olsen, who is from Wisconsin, took place. Occupy Appleton will kick off its 24/7 occupation on Nov. 4.

Occupy Madison is sponsoring ongoing rallies and other events at the state Capitol and at other locations. Occupy La Crosse, Occupy Eau Claire, Occupy Green Bay and Occupy Sheboygan are also sponsoring events.

Occupy The Hood and Occupy Milwaukee are teaming up to defeat the slave labor bill in the Wisconsin Legislature with a series of actions the week of Oct. 30. Despite ongoing police harassment, Occupy Milwaukee continues its occupation of Garden Park in the Riverwest neighborhood of Milwaukee, sponsoring various events and holding regular general assemblies.

For updates and information: www.wibailoutpeople.org. □

Occupy Detroit hits cuts, capitalists

By Mike Shane
Detroit

Occupy Detroit, which was established on Oct. 14, continues to grow and become more organized. The camp entered its second week with actions targeting cuts in services and a local capitalist baron.

On Oct. 27, Occupy Detroit joined with the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization in a noontime demonstration at the State of Michigan building. There, they protested the state's draconian cuts in welfare to those in desperate need of help, even while providing corporate welfare in the form of \$1.5 billion in tax cuts to businesses. Affecting an estimated 40,000 children, the state of Michigan stopped cash assistance to families on Oct. 1 despite a budget surplus of some \$260 million in the general fund and \$94 million in the school aid fund.

Later that day, Occupy Detroit joined with the southwest Detroit community

group Bridge Watch Detroit and the labor-community coalition Good Jobs Now in a spirited protest at the Ambassador Bridge international crossing to Canada. Billionaire Matty Maroun, private owner of the Ambassador Bridge, is attempting to block the construction of a publicly owned bridge, which would provide much needed jobs. Shutting down truck traffic for more than 45 minutes, the demonstrators demanded that the publicly owned bridge be built in consultation with the community of Delray, where the bridge would be located.

Occupy Detroit organized a march and demonstration on Oct. 28 demanding an end to the massive cuts in public bus service and an end to the attacks on bus drivers and bus mechanics, who are being blamed for the dismal performance of the Detroit Department of Transportation bus system. Demonstrators marched from the Occupy Detroit camp to the

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Detroiter demand quality bus service, Oct. 28.

WW PHOTO: MEGAN SPENCER

Police arrest 32 at Occupy Rochester

By Gene Clancy
Rochester, N.Y.

Shortly after midnight on Oct. 28, on orders from the mayor, the Rochester police arrested 32 members of the Occupy Rochester encampment at Washington Square Park, making it the first occupation in New York State to be forcibly arrested and evicted. Nearly 150 supporters stood on the sidewalks surrounding the small park chanting, "Whose park, our park?" and "Shame, shame!"

Earlier, at 5 p.m., there had been a large march from the Liberty Pole about three blocks away, where daily protests and rallies in support of the Occupy Wall Street movement have been going on since Oct. 1. The protesters rallied and set up tents and banners, intending to begin a permanent occupation, but Mayor Tom Richards had already decided to make a preemptive strike.

At 10:30 p.m., the chief of police himself showed up at the park, backed by a dozen squad cars and police vans for carting away prisoners. He made a great show of



Rochester, N.Y., Oct. 28.

PHOTO: BILL FINAN

publicly warning the occupiers that there was an 11 p.m. curfew in place for public parks, but waited until after most of the media had left to start making arrests.

James Bertolone, president of the Rochester & Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, officially condemned the arrests, saying, "I am even

more disturbed by the fact that City officials made the decision to arrest people many hours before the actual protest. Our office received a warning from City Hall many hours before the demonstration because, we believe, of our organization's support of the Occupy Wall Street protests." (Email bulletin, Oct. 29)

Following the arrests, the remaining protesters marched to the jail and maintained a vigil until early in the morning, when most of those arrested were released. A working group of Occupy Rochester has been formed to provide legal defense and strategy for those arrested.

The following night, protesters again challenged police and maintained a presence inside and on the edge of the park until dawn. There are plans to continue this activity until Nov. 2, when a large rally and march to City Hall to protest the arrests is planned. A decision about whether to massively confront the police again and reoccupy the site, or to choose another site, will be made that evening.

The exorbitant bail, multiple charges and massive police presence shows that Mayor Richards — a millionaire and former CEO of the Rochester Gas and Electric Co. — and the rest of the ruling elite of Rochester are determined to try to crush the occupation movement here before it grows any larger. Occupy Rochester is just as determined to resist. □

Wall Street & the anti-immigrant campaign

By Teresa Gutierrez

On Oct. 18 the Obama administration announced that it had deported almost 400,000 undocumented immigrants during the 2011 fiscal year. "All told, this administration has deported nearly 1.2 million people, leaving a wake of devastation in Latino communities across the nation," said the American Civil Liberties Union in a press release.

The Latino/a community has the largest group of immigrants in the U.S., but people from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean have been victimized as well by the anti-immigrant campaign sweeping the country. The massive deportations and the unprecedented detention of workers amount to a tsunami of injustice.

It is an attack on not only migrant workers but really against the entire working class. It is meant not only to terrorize one of the most exploited sectors of the working class, but also to sow division at a time when solidarity and unity among the working class is so decisive.

Make no mistake about it: The deportation and detention of workers is big business. It is hugely profitable for the capitalist class. That is why the immigration issue and the defense of immigrant workers has everything to do with the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Recent articles in the progressive press and the production of a PBS documentary, "Lost in Detention," reveal the depth of the injustice. Some of the information demonstrates the unholy alliance between the bloodsucking corporations and those in Washington who willingly take their marching orders from the CEOs.

In an article written for the Americas Program, Peter Cervantes-Gautschi shows that the two largest companies that



The notorious Willacy Detention Center in Raymondville, Texas.



DreamActivist Pennsylvania members protest at a Philadelphia immigration court on Oct. 20.

build and operate U.S. prisons are very much involved in anti-immigrant legislation from Georgia to Arizona. (cipamericas.org) This comes as little surprise as corporate lobbying in Washington — involving obscene amounts of money — is one of the reasons why there is so much anger at Wall Street.

The two corporations that Cervantes-Gautschi notes are the Corrections Corporation of America and the GEO Group. These two corporations have already

earned the wrath of progressive groups. Prison rights activists and the families of the incarcerated have for years targeted the CCA for its abuses as well as for profiting from the unjust imprisonment of so many in this country.

According to the Pew Center on the States, 1 in every 99 persons in the U.S. is behind bars. Because of institutionalized and pervasive racism, the rates are criminally higher for Black and Brown folks. The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, so the unbridled drive to lock up immigrants is no shock.

The GEO Group is a worldwide corporation based in Florida. It is infamous for securing the contract in 2003 to run the Guantánamo Bay Detention Camp on the occupied soil of socialist Cuba. This detention center has been targeted by progressives for its use by the U.S. government to illegally and unjustly detain primarily Muslims under the ruse of "fighting terrorism."

According to Cervantes-Gautschi, GEO and CCA spent a total of \$6 million to lobby Congress in just one year. He points out that as workers marched for immigrant rights in record numbers in 2006,

the scene was being set for a radical turn in immigration policy to primarily one of enforcement.

Cervantes-Gautschi notes that "Wall Street advisers publicly recommended buying stock in private prison companies like CCA and GEO," and that "for every dollar spent on lobbying the government, GEO received a \$662 return in contracts, a total of \$996.7 million." CCA received a total of \$330.4 million.

The PBS Documentary, "Lost in Detention," details how since 2008 "historic levels" of detentions and deportations have occurred, a fact that will forever mark the Obama administration.

The documentary shows how after a worker is picked up — by a Gestapo-like raid or by a terrifying police stop — and before he or she is deported, they are held in what amounts to human warehousing at these corporate-owned and run detention centers.

The imprisonment of migrant labor is the fastest-growing incarceration system in the country. There are over 250 immigrant detention centers now in the U.S. They are hell holes, exactly like the prisons that incarcerate primarily African-American and Latino/a people. They are mainly built in remote areas that are hard to get to and far from the families of the detained.

In detention, the undocumented workers risk beatings, death or rape. The documentary points out that many have no access to legal representation. Many beg for deportation just to get out of the hell hole.

The mass deportations and detentions affecting millions of workers and their families are why the immigrant rights struggle will inevitably connect in a massive and integral way with the Occupy Wall Street movement. These sectors will unite in a righteous anger against the rich ruling class that exploits us all. The seeds of that unity have already been planted. □

Repression imminent at Occupy L.A.

By Michael Martinez
Los Angeles

The number of protesters and tents occupying L.A.'s City Hall grounds has doubled since the occupation began the first weekend in October, and strong support from local unions has strengthened the action.

Meanwhile, police presence has increased. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa told the media on Oct. 27 — the day after the police attack on the Oakland, Calif., encampment — that the Los Angeles occupation would not be able to remain on the lawn. (L.A. Times, Oct. 28)

While there has been no clear decision made in the Occupy L.A. General Assembly on how the movement would react to an attempt to repress the occupation, many are already mobilizing for solidarity actions with the Oakland movement on Nov. 2.

Unions support occupation

Individuals and organizers from many unions were visibly present at Occupy L.A. by the second week. The Teamsters made regular donations to the food tent. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers sent members to spread the word about their campaign against Trader Joe stores.

UNITE-HERE and the Service Employees union had a regular presence in the General Assemblies. UNITE-HERE proposed a picket line in front of one of

the downtown hotels where they were organizing. That initiative earned a lot of support on the day of the action.

SEIU also proposed two marches, including a march on the Bank of America that almost left the Occupy L.A. campsite empty as everyone joined in. Demonstrators poured into the bank and overwhelmed the police and security, who began arresting union members who defiantly broke out into civil disobedience and sat in at the bank.

The United Teachers of L.A. organized a march to the Los Angeles Unified School District offices to fight outrageous cutbacks and plans to privatize many schools in oppressed communities by selling them to charter school corporations. The fired-up teachers set up an encampment at the School Board site and at around 10 p.m. the School Board police moved to evict them. Occupiers quickly mobilized to defend the teachers, who were able to spend the night.

Debate over role of police

Unlike the occupation at Zuccotti Park near the Stock Exchange in New York City, Occupy L.A. was granted a permit following an agreement with L.A. city officials and the LAPD. This agreement misled some within the occupation as to the role of the police. Some even considered them part of the 99 percent.

Early in the occupation, many participants opposed an "End Police Brutality

Committee" proposed by some people of color because at that time, it was argued, "there has not been any police brutality at Occupy L.A." At one point Mejican activists who argued against the police being considered part of the 99 percent were booed by other, mostly white participants.

As the debate on police brutality grew, however, more and more of the occupiers began to reject the notion that police were friends of Occupy L.A., especially as Boston, Chicago and other city encampments suffered brutal police attacks. This opening cleared the way for the Oct. 12 Coalition Against Police Brutality to march from Occupy L.A. with a good number of supporters.

A big program was held on the Pelican Bay Prison hunger strike. Workers World Party activists participating in the events were able to call for a march in solidarity

with the prisoners at the General Assembly, support for which passed by consensus just days before the strike called off. The WWP members also promoted a film about socialist Cuba, which was shown to all the occupation participants.

WWP members also helped organize another action at local bank offices. When they marched to Wells Fargo Bank just a few blocks away, security quickly scrambled to shut their doors and closed their lobby to the public with barricades. For the protesters, this amounted to a large victory, and they marched through L.A.'s financial district chanting, "Fight the banks, shut them down!"

One marcher waved a large portrait of Lenin at the bankers. It was like waving a cross at a vampire. The next day there was also a Karl Marx portrait that read: "99% of the world unite!" □

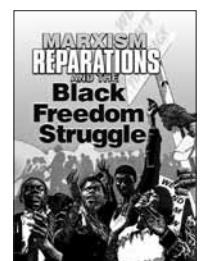
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Imperialist war crimes in Libya spark anger and resistance

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

After Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi was brutally assassinated and his hometown of Sirte destroyed, the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to end its so-called "No Fly Zone" over this North African state. Its March vote imposing an arms embargo and "No Fly Zone" resulted in a massive naval blockade and aerial bombardment that killed thousands and caused tens of billions of dollars in damages.

After the Security Council's resolution ending the "No Fly Zone," the North Atlantic Treaty Organization announced it was suspending its bombing campaign over Libya, which had exacted 26,000 sorties and nearly 10,000 airstrikes. Russia introduced the resolution to end the bombing even though it did not participate in it.

The Voice of Russia stated, "Foreign Minister Segei Lavrov has called for an international inquiry into the circumstances of Colonel Gaddafi's death. [His] relatives are planning to file a lawsuit against NATO with the International Criminal Court. ... Lawyer Marcel Secaldi [said] Colonel Gaddafi was killed during a NATO raid on his convoy. But since NATO's mandate in Libya did not allow for strikes against civilian targets, the incident could be classified as a war crime." (Oct. 31)

Russian legal commentator Boris Dolgov says, "The lawsuit could shed light on the circumstances of Gaddafi's death and draw international attention to the fact that NATO's forces had sided with the opposition in Libya's civil war," but that the action will face formidable obstacles. Other analysts say that such an action will be an exercise in futility in light of the prevailing international situation.

Vasily Belozerov, co-chairperson of the Russian Military Political Analysts Association, said of this bid to seek legal redress for U.N. and NATO crimes before the ICC: "The court's judgment will be politically motivated. It won't be directed against 'the powers that be,' like NATO, or against the current government in Libya."

The article continues: "The reason is crystal clear. Even though the legitimacy of NATO's operation in Libya was questionable from the very beginning, the international community kept quiet. They won't have a chance. They won't be able to sue anyone since there will be no one to sue. The world's most powerful military and political alliance had resolved to overthrow a politically stable regime."

Despite NATO's proclamation that it stopped bombing Libya on Oct. 31, its

Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen's presence in Tripoli that day indicates that the imperialists are not leaving the country. Days before Rasmussen's visit, a new coalition — "Friends of Libya" — was announced. It would be formed to help consolidate the country under neocolonial rule.

Qatar, a Gulf state with strong U.S. ties, will head this alliance. This configuration has the same name as the imperialist-hosted conferences held during the bombing campaign. It will include the U.S., France and Britain.

The Voice of Russia notes, "Other countries had joined NATO in taking sides with the rebels fighting against Gaddafi. Among [Transitional National Council] fighters were hundreds of Qatari service members. The commander of Qatar's army [said] that Qatari aviation would be safeguarding air space over Libya because Tripoli had no planes left." (Oct. 31)

Rasmussen said that in Libya he discussed the NTC's "expectations as regards possible NATO assistance in the future." He said that the war against Libya, "Operation Unified Protector," was "one of the most successful in NATO's history." (BBC, Oct. 31)

Imperialist destruction and theft

Despite claims by the U.S. and NATO that the war against Libya was "successful," the reality on the ground has proved otherwise. The war aimed to destroy the accomplishments of the 1969 Al-Fateh Revolution and to remove Gadhafi's government.

The U.S. ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, and the alliance's chief operations commander, Admiral James Stavridis, also claimed success in a New York Times editorial on Oct. 31. Despite President Barack Obama's pronouncements early in the war that the U.S. role would be limited, Daalder and Stavridis stressed that the Pentagon "played a leading role in destroying Libya's air defense system and providing critical resources, including the vast majority of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and the aerial refueling assets." (Reuters, Oct. 31)

Reuters says, "Fourteen NATO members and four other states provided naval and air forces, but only eight NATO nations took part in combat missions. Daalder and Stavridis said U.S. planes flew a quarter of all sorties over Libya, France and Britain a third of all missions — most of them strike operations — and the remaining participants flew roughly 40 percent." (Oct. 31)

The war resulted in Libya losing 50 percent of its Gross Domestic Product. The

International Monetary Fund noted that Libya's GDP was \$71.3 billion in 2010 — suggesting eight months of conflict cost the country's 6.5 million people around \$35 billion. Bank payment systems broke down, and the country had difficulty financing imports, the IMF said. (Reuters, Oct. 26)

In addition to the U.S.-NATO bombing's impact and the NTC "rebels" attacks on the ground, the imperialist states froze between \$160 billion to \$170 billion in Libyan assets. Other losses include the theft and destruction of government property that was orchestrated by the imperialists and their rebel allies.

In Benghazi, the Tripoli Post reports, "A priceless collection of nearly 8,000 ancient gold, silver and bronze coins, much of which dates from the time of Alexander the Great, was stolen by robbers who broke into a bank vault." Benghazi is the center of the NTC rebellion that began in February. (Oct. 31)

The theft involved drilling through the concrete floor of an underground vault in the National Commercial Bank of Benghazi. An expert called it "one of the greatest thefts in archeological history." The heist removed untold wealth from the country.

The Tripoli Post article reports, "The treasure included more than 10,000 pieces, with 7,700 coins dating back to Greek, Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic times. Several artifacts, including monuments and figurines of bronze, glass and ivory, as well as jewelry ... are also believed to have been stolen by the thieves."

Anger and resistance mount

Although the imperialists and their allies have wrought massive destruction in Libya, anger is escalating over the attempts to return the country to neocolonialism. On Oct. 25, five days after Gadhafi's assassination, a fuel tanker facility explosion in Sirte reportedly killed more than 100 people.

The NTC rebels quickly declared it an accident, although suspicions were that it might have resulted from sabotage. Sirte has been a stronghold of Gadhafi loyalists. Residents of the coastal city fiercely resisted the U.S.-NATO bombardment for months.

Whether the explosion was accidental or intentional, the NTC rebels were unable to adequately respond. Near Sirte, area resident Ali Faraj said, "The explosion happened yesterday at around noon. It was very strong. I live 25 kilometers away and I heard it." (AFP, Oct. 26)

Faraj complained that after the explosion, "There were no ambulances for the

wounded, no trucks for the firefighters, and we couldn't put out the fire ... because the rebels stole all the vehicles."

Anger is escalating. Reuters reported, "The war is not yet over for Libya's new rulers in the desert town of Bani Walid, where Gaddafi loyalists vow to fight on for their fallen leader and other residents are angry over violence and looting." People are "enraged by what they see as acts of retribution by forces loyal to Libya's new government" and "tribesmen say their men are already trying to regroup into a new insurgency movement ... around the strategic desert town south of ... Tripoli." (Oct. 26)

Libya's current situation is representative of the role of U.S. imperialism and its allies in other parts of the world. In Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen — U.S. military operations in these countries have worsened the masses' conditions.

The NTC forces attempting to rule the country will be beholden to Washington, London, Paris and Rome for their security and meager resources. Only when the Libyan people can rise up and retake control of their land, resources and waterways will the potential exist for genuine independence and development inside this North African state. □



Oops, someone spilled the beans

"West Sees Libya as Ripe at Last for Businesses." That was the lead story headline on the front page of the Oct. 29 edition of the New York Times. It was so frank it took your breath away. One week after NATO forces lynched Moammar Gadhafi, the Times admitted that NATO's seven months of slaughtering Libyans were aimed at opening up the country to the banks and corporations of world imperialism. Someone at the Times must have noticed, since the headline in the online edition changed at least twice in the next 24 hours. By Oct. 30, it read: "Western Companies See Prospects for Business in Libya."

— John Catalinotto

Tijuana conference to take up hemisphere's struggles

By Cheryl LaBash

Where is the electrifying Occupy Wall Street movement headed?

From capitalist media pundits to the Occupy Wall Street encampments struggling to hold public space in countless cities and towns across the U.S., this question is bubbling underneath the daily actions and police repression.

An opportunity to discuss the experience of other such movements will take place just across the U.S. border from San Diego in Tijuana, Mexico, on Dec. 2 to 4 at the 8th U.S./Cuba/Mexico/Latin America Labor Conference. It will follow a three-day Workers' School with instruc-

tors from the Lázaro Peña Cadre School in Havana, Cuba. Online registration and information are available at <http://LaborExchange.blogspot.com>.

Occupations, general strikes and militant marches are being renewed in the U.S. today. On May 1, 2006, the massive immigrant rights marches were effectively general strikes in many areas. This national movement had a strong impact. Earlier this year, tens of thousands mobilized daily to support an occupation of Wisconsin's Capitol in Madison to challenge an anti-worker program. Through all this, the working class is learning to take action in its own name.

In Central and South America and the

Caribbean, workers, Indigenous people and rural farmers have walked this path before us. They have been on the receiving end of imperialist economic domination, coup d'états, military dictatorships and rigged elections sponsored by the United States. Today the Mexican electrical workers are occupying the central square in Mexico City, which they have held since March. Chilean and Colombian students are fighting for education rights. Moreover, tiny Cuba has held off the imperialist giant to the north poised to destroy them for more than 50 years with a battle of ideas and profound unity.

The Oakland call for a citywide general strike and march to the port on Nov. 2 to

"block the flow of capital" states the truth: "The Oakland General Strike will demonstrate the wide reaching implications of the Occupy Wall Street movement. The entire world is fed up with the huge disparity of wealth caused by the present system. Now is the time that the people are doing something about it. The Oakland General Strike is a warning shot to the 1 percent: Their wealth only exists because the 99 percent creates it for them."

That is true. For those who want to discuss where this truth can take us with active builders of independent social orders, send a representative to the December conference in Tijuana. We have a world to win!

Below average, struggling

The Occupy Wall Street protests are right. The richest 1 percent get richer and richer — and the top 1 percent of that 1 percent get richer still. Meanwhile the lower 99 percent — probably, based on certain statistics, really the lower 90 percent — get poorer or stagnate.

There are many ways to prove this. Statistics come out every so often that bring it home. The Census Bureau released one such number in the last week of October that should have been on the front page of every newspaper and the top of every TV news show. It had to do with the median annual income for an individual in the United States in 2010.

This median annual income, rounded to thousands, was \$26,000. That median has dropped by 7 percent since 2000. Most of this drop took place after June 2009 — that is, during the so-called recovery.

What's the definition of a median? It's the midway point in a collection of numerical data. Half the values being analyzed are less than or equal to the median; half are equal to or greater than the median. In this case, of the 150 million people working, 75 million have annual incomes that are less than or equal to \$26,000.

In nearly all the states in the U.S., a \$26,000 income is less than what is needed for an individual to live independently. To do that, an income must guarantee not only food and clothing, but

housing, health care, transportation and other necessities. It means that at least 75 million people are struggling on less than that, and many feel they are losing.

The median is only one number that summarizes a load of information. It cannot tell us how many people have incomes under \$10,000 per year, nor how many people of color, women and youth are at or below the median. Other figures show that the more you suffer national and gender oppression and discrimination, the more likely you are to be poor.

Still, it says a lot that the median income, counting everyone, is so low, while at the same time a sector of the people at the top of the income range have grown disgustingly richer and richer.

An ever-larger proportion of the U.S. working class — who have been told they are blessed to be living and working for the capitalists here in the United States — thus have a daily existence that puts them in contradiction with the system. That explains why there is such broad support for the Occupy Wall Street movement. And why it is inevitable that the decades of attacks on the working class are finally beginning to awaken a powerful response.

As this growing movement struggles against the capitalists and the "1%" who own and control all the wealth created by the working class, the issue of the right to a job or income for all at a livable wage will more and more take center stage.

WWP Secretariat announces new position

SPECIAL TO WW

The Secretariat of Workers World Party has appointed Larry Holmes as the First Secretary of WWP as of Oct. 24. The Secretariat considers this appointment to be provisional as it will be ratified at a future national leadership plenum of the Party. Sam Marcy was the Party's founder, theoretician, leader and Chairperson until his death in 1998. Because of the enormous and wholly unique role that Sam Marcy played in the Party's history, the Secretariat decided that it was more appropriate to create a new position, First Secretary. □

Occupy Detroit hits cuts

Continued from page 7

Rosa Parks Transit Center and then to City Hall, raising demands for increased federal funding of mass transit, including paratransit service for the disabled community. At City Hall, bus riders spoke, as did Lisa Franklin, president of Warriors on Wheels, an advocacy group for people with disabilities.

Initially populated by mostly young people from the city and suburbs, the camp has grown to include many homeless workers from the downtown area,

RAINBOW SOLIDARITY In Defense of CUBA

Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*

This ground-breaking book documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes.

Available at Amazon and bookstores around the country

who are now an integral part of the camp's day-to-day operation. On Oct. 30, a family day featured face painting, pumpkin carving, art, games and candy. Several actions are planned for the coming week. □

A NEW PAMPHLET

**CAPITALISM
AT A
DEAD END**
JOB Destruction,
Overproduction
and CRISIS in
the High Tech Era
A MARXIST VIEW
By Fred Goldstein,
author of *Low-Wage Capitalism*

www.LowWageCapitalism.com

Solidarity with struggles in Latin America

The following are excerpts from a talk at the Oct. 8-9 Workers World Party National Conference in New York City given by Philadelphia WWP organizer Berta Joubert-Ceci.

I want to pay tribute to the peoples in Latin America who for several years now have been rising up against neoliberalism, that new, criminal face of imperialism. And who were the models for the awesome wave of protests that extended to Tunisia and Egypt. And that have continued with the demonstrations and occupations against capitalism all over the world, including here in the belly of the beast. And I purposely say against capitalism even though many of them are not clearly defined, but it is capitalism and imperialism that made them happen.

I want to call attention to two struggles in particular — Chile and Honduras. In Chile, where the corporate interests of the United States assassinated democratically elected President Salvador Allende in 1973, a September 11 date that this country chooses to forget. And then they carried out a bloody repression, installing a criminal dictator, Augusto Pinochet. Thousands of people were tortured and massacred; many had to leave the country in exile.

In fact, we have here in this city a compañero, Victor Toro, in exile, who is facing deportation. We should keep his case in everybody's mind, in every agenda of struggle.

The privatization of education, part of that anti-people neoliberal agenda, has woken up a glorious movement in Chile. It has the most privatized system of education in the Americas. The government of Sebastian Piñera, remember him? The one who used the rescue of the miners a year ago as an international propaganda for his government? Piñera is a product of the Pinochet regime and of course, a good friend of the U.S. But he is being challenged; the students have risen up and are demanding quality and free education for all.

And how has the government responded? With the force of the Carabineros, the same police force like in the time of Pinochet. One of the main leaders of this movement is a young woman, president of the Students Federation of Chile, Camila Vallejo. She is the second woman president in the federation's 104-year history.



Berta Joubert-Ceci

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

What is even more relevant is the class consciousness that her leadership brings, because she is a communist.

Then we have another friend of the U.S.A., Jose "Pepe" Lobo, the so-called president of Honduras. Lobo is just the continuation of the coup regime of Roberto Micheletti who kidnapped — again — a democratically elected president, Manuel Zelaya, on June 28, 2009. Again, the U.S. was and is still involved, for its own corporate interests, in the repression against the people.

But the courageous National Front of Popular Resistance has continued mobilizing and organizing to conquer the government. Widespread repression and violence against members of the Front, journalists and campesinos, particularly in the region of the Aguan, continue. And the U.S. continues defending the government. We must continue our support for the Resistance and demand the U.S. government cease its support for the Lobo regime.

Latin America and the Caribbean continue to be an inspiration of struggle. The progressive governments of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador have made enormous advances on behalf of the people, in health care, education, housing, with new constitutions, for the integration of the countries of the South, for associations based on solidarity. Most of all, they are thoroughly anti-imperialist. And that is not forgiven by the empire, the U.S.A. There is always a constant threat against those governments and movements. We must continue to be steadfast in our support of those struggles against imperialism.

Vivan the students of Chile! Viva the Resistance in Honduras! Viva Cuba! Vivan the movements in Latin America and the Caribbean! U.S. out of Haiti and Puerto Rico!

Protests at Occupy Philly

Continued from page 5

march on Oct. 29, protesters from Occupy Philly used the nearby subway to travel to Temple University, where former President Bill Clinton was campaigning for the re-election of Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter.

Under the theme, "End the Silence," they challenged the domination of U.S. politics by corporate interests. Organizers decried the current system, which places the "power of campaign contributions over the power of people, that leaves people of color, women, LGBTAQ individuals, workers, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and countless others disenfranchised." (Occupy Philadelphia media advisory, Oct. 29)

In other events, former political prisoner Alicia Rodriguez explained the history of U.S. colonization of Puerto Rico on Oct. 26 before a crowd of some 80 people at Occupy Philly.

On Oct. 27, Diop Olugbala held a press

conference in front of City Hall to denounce city officials for refusing to approve a permit for a Black is Back march on Nov. 5. To justify this denial, city officials claim that all available cops are being used to police Occupy Philly. Olugbala is running as an independent candidate for mayor under the name of Wali "Diop" Rahman.

At an Oct. 27 hearing, dozens of community representatives testified against the proposed extension of a center city youth curfew to a citywide curfew, many charging that it will be used mainly against youth of color. Speaking of the 1985 police bombing of the MOVE organization headquarters, Pam Africa, MOVE minister of confrontation, said, "You are the city that dropped a bomb killing 11 men, women and children. You don't give a [expletive] about children." The City Council passed the new legislation, although not one person spoke in favor of the repressive bill at the hearing. □

Cuban children's tour, U.N. vote

Demand end to U.S. blockade of Cuba

By Cheryl LaBash

Cuba's National Children's Theater, La Colmenita, or "The Little Beehive," concluded its U.S. tour in San Francisco on Oct. 29. The love-filled, U.N. Children's Fund ambassadors' visit coincided with two events significant for Cuba: the 35th anniversary of the midair bombing of Cuban airline's Flight 455 in Barbados and the 20th annual U.N. vote condemning the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

La Colmenita's latest work, Abracadabra, depicts the school children's search for "the essence of things," guided by a new young teacher. The children, in turn, guide their audiences to view the U.S. imprisonment of the Cuban Five from the perspective of the Cuban people, for whom the Five are heroes who sought to shield their socialist homeland from terror attacks.

Almost everyone in Cuba is personally touched by the more than 50-year terror campaign waged against them from

U.S. territory with impunity. The Cubana 455 explosion and crash killed 73 people, among them the then 41-year-old father of Carlos Alberto Cremata, La Colmenita's founder and director.

Luis Posada Carriles, one of the still living architects of that horror, walks free in Miami despite an active extradition order from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and an international treaty that mandates that such perpetrators either be extradited or brought to trial in their resident country.

On Oct. 24, La Colmenita brought songs, music and the true story of the Cuban Five as told by noted actor and activist Danny Glover to the United Nations. The tears, joy and dancing evoked by the irresistible young performers uplifted the U.N. audience as it did in every venue, delighting all ages with their unabashed warmth and love.

The next day, for the 20th consecutive time, the U.N. General Assembly voted

overwhelmingly — with 186 countries agreeing — to the "necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." As in last year's vote, only the U.S. and Israel voted for continuing the blockade of Cuba. Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau abstained.

Although the paramilitary acts of aggression on Cuba stand out in their overt violence and could mistakenly be attributed to desperate acts by a small number of fanatical Cuban exiles in Florida, the unilateral U.S. economic blockade is no less an act of war. It reveals the U.S. government's overall goal is to destroy the independent, socialist Cuban revolution.

In his statement before the vote, Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla reported that the blockade has cost the Cuban people \$975 billion. He cited the 1948 Convention on Genocide, pointing to the April 6, 1960, U.S.

government memo which stated the objectives of the blockade as "to cause ... disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship ... weaken the economic life of Cuba ... denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

He continued, "The United States has never hidden the fact that the objective it pursues is to overthrow the Revolutionary government and destroy the constitutional order that the Cuban people sovereignly defends. That is what former President George Bush called 'a change of regime,' which has currently acquired new dimensions."

The 2010 U.N. vote total was 187, one more than this year's vote on Oct. 25. Libya was absent, having suffered massive bombing and the destruction of its independent government at the hands of U.S./NATO imperialist aggression. □

Workers' struggle against G20 and Eurozone crisis

By G. Dunkel

As a financial crisis rages through Europe, the G20, which officially describes itself as a meeting of world leaders "to provide world growth with more stable, sustainable foundations," is scheduled to meet on Nov. 3-4 in Cannes, a small coastal city on the French Riviera best known for its annual film festival.

During the last week in October, the Greek Parliament pushed through another even harsher austerity package putting the cost of the debt crisis on the backs of the workers, even though thousands were protesting in the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki. European government heads managed to cobble together a bailout on Oct. 27 based on this severe austerity plan to rescue the banks that had loaned money to Greece.

Financial markets rose worldwide on the news of the deal, perhaps prematurely. The global chief investment officer for Citi Private Bank described this bailout as "a patchwork." Another financial expert said, "There are very real risks that this will prove to be just another pivot in the road." (New York Times, Oct. 28)

On Oct. 28, thousands of Greek workers and their allies in Thessaloniki, the second largest city in Greece, blocked the annual military parade held to honor

Greece's refusal to surrender to fascist Italy in 1940. They threw bottles and eggs at President Karolos Papoulias; His Eminence the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, Anthimos Roussas; and other officials until the cops evacuated all these big shots. Although the Greek workers and especially the communists were the strongest and most valiant enemies of Mussolini and Hitler, they supported these demonstrations against the Greek government.

Demonstrators burned the German flag, according to pictures on Citizen-Store, to protest how Greece has become a puppet government for its foreign lenders. Germany occupied Greece in World War II. The military parades were also blocked in Héraklion (in Crete), Rhodes, Patras, Kalamata, Trakala and Naupli. (Le Parisien, Oct. 28).

This "sovereign debt crisis" in Europe is different from the housing bubble in the United States. When the Greek government splurged billions of euros (1 euro at the time was about \$1.20) on the 2004 Olympics, they had to borrow the money from German and French banks at a high interest rate. Currently Greece has to pay around 10 percent on its bonds to attract buyers, who consider Greek bonds to be high risk.

But the big, private banks could borrow at 1 percent in 2004. This meant



Protesters in Greece, Oct. 28.

a substantial profit, as long as Greece didn't default. For the banks, a number of other European countries, in particular Portugal, Ireland and Spain, face similar "sovereign debt" problems. Threatened by defaults, the eurozone has even invited China, one of the few large countries in the world with a huge reserve of foreign currencies, to invest in its stabilization fund.

An important focus of the G20 is allegedly to alleviate hunger. The method they have chosen, according to a report of Attac-France, is to strengthen the market in agricultural products and remove all import quotas.

What happened in Haiti in 2008 is a good example of how such policies fail. Starting in the 1980s, U.S. experts put pressure on Haiti to transform its agriculture, especially after the fall of Jean-

Claude Duvalier. His successor was pressured into removing restrictions on rice imports, which meant U.S.-subsidized rice flooded the Haitian market, destroying local production, which had generally produced all the rice Haiti needed. By 2000, Haiti was a major export market for U.S. rice and when prices for rice shot up in 2008, Haitians starved until they nearly overthrew the government.

Attac-France has assembled a coalition, supported by major progressive forces like the French Communist Party, the New Anti-capitalist Party, trade unions and community organizations, to hold anti-G20 teach-ins on Nov. 1 and 2, and then to conduct protests as close as they can get to the meeting in Cannes. They expect to get some participants from Spain and Germany, but the French government is closing the nearby French-Italian border. □

Philadelphia



Diop Olugbalato held a press conference Oct. 27 for Black is Back action in Philadelphia.

PHILLY SUMMIT ON SOCIALISM

You're invited to the Workers World Party Summit on Socialism in Philadelphia on Saturday, Nov. 19.

The Summit will start at 2 p.m. at Calvary Church, 48th and Baltimore, in W. Philly. WWP leaders Larry Holmes and Fred Goldstein will be the featured speakers.

For more information, call 610-931-2615 or email phila@workers.org. □

Asamblea Popular del 5 de noviembre para unir las demandas de trabajadores/as y de la comunidad con el movimiento OWS

Por Dee Knight

La Asamblea Popular en el Colegio de Hostos en el Bronx de Nueva York, programada para el sábado 5 de noviembre, tiene todos los ingredientes para convenir un momento unificador, uniendo las luchas de los/as trabajadores y las comunidades junto al creciente movimiento de Ocupar Wall Street. El acercamiento en el Bronx se ha centrado en los sindicatos de trabajadores/as del correo, asociaciones de madres y padres y grupos de inquilinos. Las personas están muy contentas de saber que estarán alentadas a hablar en su nombre, así como escuchar a otras con los mismos problemas.

Los/as miembros de CASA, una organización grande de inquilinos/as que sirve a los/as 5.000 residentes de edificios que estaban abandonados en el barrio de Highbridge, respondieron a un llamado poniendo a la disposición de otros/as inquilinos/as en toda la ciudad su conocimiento y experiencia en la lucha contra los dueños de edificios.

Los presidentes de las asociaciones de madres y padres en el distrito 12 del sur del Bronx están movilizando a sus miembros para que participen, centrándose en las cuestiones que se refieren al pueblo trabajador. Habrá guardería infantil gratuita durante la Asamblea.

“Woodlawn es Wall Street”

En el Bronx, la asediada Banda de Hermanos — los trabajadores en el cementerio Woodlawn — llevan a cabo una decidida lucha contra el abuso racista y la intimidación antisindical y han exhortado a los/as ocupantes de Wall Street a

unirse a ellos. “Woodlawn es Wall Street”, declaró Rick Coss, representante del Local 808 de Teamsters en Woodlawn.

Una marcha y manifestación en el portón principal del cementerio, programadas para el 12 de noviembre, una semana después de la Asamblea del Pueblo, es parte de un “maratón de protesta del Bronx” que incluye una campaña para salvar el Servicio Postal y una lucha continuada contra la pobreza y la violencia. El 29 de octubre, una marcha contra la pobreza y la violencia se llevará a cabo en el sumamente oprimido barrio de Mott Haven, sitio que se hizo famoso por el libro de Jonathan Kozol, “Desigualdades Salvajes”.

El llamado a “Ocupar el Bronx” surgió el 22 de octubre cuando cientos de personas se reunían en la Plaza de Fordham, en el corazón del Bronx y a mitad de camino entre el sur del Bronx y el cementerio de Woodlawn.

Las luchas de la comunidad están en el centro del movimiento del Bronx: el derecho del pueblo a una vivienda digna, educación de calidad, servicios de salud y puestos de trabajo. Una rabia se está gestando por la amenaza de recortes masivos de empleos y cierres del Servicio Postal en medio de la crisis actual. Los/as organizadores/as han comenzado un estudio sobre las oficinas de correos y sus barrios circundantes para determinar cuáles deberían ser los objetivos principales en el creciente movimiento de “ocupar”.

Planes para la acción

La Asamblea del Pueblo girará sobre acciones a tomar, según los/as organizadores/as del Congreso de la Comunidad

del sur del Bronx. Una marcha por empleos con derechos y beneficios sindicales está proyectada para tener lugar el 17 de noviembre, convocada por el Proyecto de Participación Cívica de Nueva York del sindicato SEIU 32 BJ. La marcha comenzará en el puente High que cruza el Río de Harlem entre el barrio Washington Heights de Manhattan y el barrio University Heights (cerca del Colegio Comunitario del Bronx) por el lado del Bronx. Este lugar destaca la necesidad de un programa masivo para reconstruir la deteriorada infraestructura — un esfuerzo que requiere un programa a gran escala de obras públicas como la Administración de Proyectos de Trabajo de los años 30.

Otra demanda clave es “El alimento es un derecho”. Alrededor de una tercera parte de los 1,4 millones habitantes del Bronx califican para las subvenciones de alimentos bajo el programa federal de Asistencia Nutricional Suplementaria. Ellos/as enfrentan amenazas de recortes de servicios mientras navegan el complicado programa para solicitar los cupones de alimentos que de hecho niega a muchos/as el poder recibir los beneficios. Cientos de personas se han movilizado para luchar por el derecho a alimentarse, y una campaña más amplia está en camino. Los/as organizadores/as del Congreso de la Comunidad también están planeando acciones para aumentar la autosuficiencia alimentaria tal y como fue promovida por las Panteras Negras y los Young Lords en los años 60 y 70.

Los intereses de los/as jóvenes — y su derecho a un futuro — son prioridad en la agenda. El programa del Departamento

de la Policía de Nueva York de parar y registrar (“stop and frisk”) a cualquier joven es una realidad personal diaria para la mayoría de jóvenes que viven en los barrios pobres del sur del Bronx, Harlem, Brooklyn y Queens. El mensaje está claro: “Si eres joven y no eres blanco/a, y estás caminando en una calle pública, eres sospechoso/a”. La Asamblea del Pueblo va a tratar de cómo revertir estos ataques y poner el sistema a juicio por sus muchas acciones criminales contra los/as jóvenes, tratará también sobre la lucha para un cambio verdadero, enfocándose en el derecho a un empleo, a una educación libre de deudas, y por un futuro con mejoras alternativas que la cárcel o la guerra.

Un movimiento para el poder del pueblo

La Asamblea del Pueblo se enfocará en construir el poder del pueblo y construir alianzas entre las comunidades de trabajadores/as y el pueblo oprimido y el movimiento de “ocupación”. Hay un deseo profundo de responder al llamado del grupo de gente-de-color que trabaja en Ocupar Wall Street, y “construir un movimiento incluyente consciente de la raza”. La Asamblea del Pueblo dará prioridad a las comunidades de color — incluyendo a los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes, indocumentados/as, y trabajadores/as con bajos sueldos, presos/as, gente LGTB de color, comunidades religiosas marginadas como la musulmana, el pueblo indígena, y todos/as aquellos/as que tienen responsabilidades que no les permiten participar en la ocupación. La meta es hacer accesible el movimiento a todos/as, y así hacer un movimiento verdadero para el poder del pueblo. □

Nuevos datos sobre el control global empresarial corroboran el ‘Imperialismo’ de Lenin

Por Deirdre Griswold

Los investigadores de Zurich, en Suiza, han utilizado una base de datos en una poderosa computadora para analizar cuáles son las empresas transnacionales que dominan la economía mundial. Sus hallazgos, llamados “La red de control corporativo global,” aparecieron este verano en arxiv.org, un editor en línea de material científico.

Utilizando la información de la base de datos financieros ORBIS, que les proporcionó datos sobre los “37 millones de actores económicos, tanto de personas físicas como empresas situadas en 194 países, y aproximadamente 13 millones de enlaces de propiedad (relaciones de inversión)”, el equipo de científicos de ETH Zurich dirigido por Stefania Vitali, utilizó un nuevo análisis matemático para desentrañar las estructuras de los vínculos entre las empresas transnacionales y sus filiales y entre ellas mismas.

¿El resultado? De este gran número de actores empresariales, en 2007 “no más de 147 empresas controlaban casi el 40 por ciento del valor monetario de todas las empresas transnacionales”, escribió

Rachel Ehrenberg en un artículo que resume las conclusiones del grupo. (“Financial world dominated by a few”, ‘El mundo financiero dominado por unos pocos’, Science News, 24 de septiembre)

Los/as autores/as dicen que su trabajo es el primer intento realizado para trazar las múltiples conexiones entre las transnacionales, definidas como empresas que tienen al menos un 10 por ciento de su riqueza en más de un país. Ellos/as describen la estructura que surgió como una parecida a un “corbatín”, con una gran cantidad de entidades corporativas en la periferia, pero un pequeño grupo en el centro controlando el flujo de la riqueza.

Aunque la economía capitalista mundial actual es mucho más grande y compleja que un siglo atrás, cuando V.I. Lenin escribió su precursor libro “Imperialismo”, este intento por parte de los/as matemáticos para penetrar en el oscuro mundo de las empresas y el capital financiero confirma lo que el líder de la revolución rusa escribió en 1916.

Lenin mostró cómo incluso entonces los grandes bancos, compañías de seguros y otras instituciones financieras de Europa y Estados Unidos habían crecido

dominando sobre todas las demás formas de capital. Él utilizó los datos disponibles entonces para demostrar que habían formado carteles gigantes que se dividían los mercados del mundo en “esferas de influencia”.

Escrito durante la Primera Guerra Mundial, el libro expone lo que llevó a las naciones capitalistas a medio exterminarse en la lucha por obtener superganancias por todo el mundo. El mensaje era claro: la guerra y la explotación continuarán mientras exista el capitalismo.

No hay un mensaje como éste en estos recientes hallazgos. Por el contrario, la investigación está dirigida a los gobiernos capitalistas y a las instituciones multacionales los cuales los/as autores esperan que implementen mejores políticas.

Sin embargo, como este estudio llega en un momento en que el sistema capitalista está en una profunda crisis de sobreproducción que se está haciendo sentir en todo el mundo, disipa la teoría de que el capitalismo se ha convertido de alguna manera más democrático porque, por ejemplo, millones de personas tienen que depender de pensiones que invierten en fondos mutuos.

Como dice el movimiento Ocupar Wall Street, sólo un pequeño número de personas en el mundo realmente controla la riqueza. En realidad son mucho menos del 1 por ciento y se concentran en los países imperialistas.

Las 50 con más control en el mundo se muestran en una tabla al final del estudio. Veinticuatro de ellas son de los Estados Unidos. La mayoría de los nombres son poco conocidos: FMR Corp., el Capital Group y State Street están entre las más grandes. Pero detrás de estos nombres están muchas de las mismas familias conocidas de la clase dirigente que han escogido presidentes y secretarios de estado por generaciones para asegurarse que el gobierno de EE.UU. ponga sus intereses de clase antes que nada.

En el período reciente, esto ha significado apropiarse de billones de dólares en dinero de rescate del gobierno cuando los mercados falseaban, incluso mientras millones de trabajadores/as perdían sus puestos de trabajo y sus viviendas.

Lenin llamó al imperialismo la “fase superior del capitalismo”. ¿Cuánto tiempo más se permitirá permanecer a un sistema tan horrible? □